

Better-Than-Boxed Homemade Hamburger Helper

Here is what you need to make this easy one-pot dinner:



TIME
7 to 10 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

SOURCE
ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 heaping tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 3 cups beef broth
- 1 cup uncooked elbow macaroni
- 2 cups freshly grated cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Brown the beef and onions: Add the ground beef and chopped onion to a soup pot. Cook over medium-high heat for about 7 to 10 minutes, breaking the meat up with a spoon as it browns. If there is a lot of excess fat, spoon most of it out.
- 2.** Add the flavor base: Stir in the tomato paste, garlic powder, and chili powder. Mix well so the beef gets evenly coated and the tomato paste has a chance to cook into the meat.
- 3.** Add the broth and pasta: Pour in the beef broth and turn the heat up to high. Once the mixture starts boiling, stir in the uncooked elbow macaroni.
- 4.** Simmer until tender: Reduce the heat so the mixture stays at a rapid simmer, not a hard boil. Cook uncovered for 13 to 15 minutes, stirring every couple of minutes, until the pasta is tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed.
- 5.** Stir in the cheese: Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the freshly grated cheddar cheese until melted and smooth.
- 6.** Season and rest: Taste and season with salt and pepper as needed. Let the pasta sit for a couple of minutes before serving so the sauce can thicken a bit more.

SWAPS & NOTES

This recipe is very forgiving, which makes it great for busy home cooks.

Ground beef: Lean ground beef works best, but if you use a fattier blend, just spoon off the excess grease after browning.

Cheddar cheese: Freshly grated cheddar melts more smoothly than pre-shredded cheese and gives the sauce a creamier finish.

Chili powder: This does not make the dish spicy.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Use freshly grated cheese whenever possible.

It melts better and gives the finished dish a smoother, creamier texture.

Pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that can make the sauce a little grainy.

Stir the pasta regularly while it cooks so it does not stick to the bottom of the pot.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/better-than-boxed-homemade-hamburger-helper/>